The Beats Resound

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The Beats Resound

by BeckySinger

Summary

While checking on a possible werewolf attack in a patch of woods near Santa Cruz, California, Dean stumbles onto his first rave. That is only one of the 3 firsts he will experience that night.

Excerpt:

...At first, he thinks it's probably campers or drifters, which means werewolf bait, but the closer he gets to the source, he knows that's not what it is. He can see flashing lights, hear bass pumping so hard the trees seem to tremble with it. He follows the light and sound until he can distinguish the music, stuff he'd normally never listen to, songs cut and layered with electronic beats, synthesizers, and the sound of scratching vinyl. He walks a little closer, and sees a clearing open up, filled with a mass of people dancing and swaying and making out amid strobe lights. A hoodie-clad deejay has his equipment set up on a stone outcropping above the crowd.

This is not a monster bait situation...

Notes

Disclaimer: As always, I don't own the characters or the show. I'm just taking Dean out for a joyride. Also, any resemblance of the OMC to persons living or dead is a complete coincidence.

Author's Note: Title comes from Lorde's "Biting Down," which I was listening to when I first got the idea.

A possible werewolf-related death and coordinates sent by his Dad brings Dean out into the middle of a patch of woods near Santa Cruz, California. The plan is to gank the werewolf—or werewolves, if it comes to it—and then maybe swing by Stanford to see how Sam was adjusting to college life. Just to see, not to bother him. It's been a month since Sam left, and he hasn't heard from him, which he takes to mean he's still mad that Dean didn't take sides in that blow-out of a fight that preceded his departure. (Dean had just stayed quietly in the background, only interceding to try to play peacemaker when it looked like they were going to literally rip each other's heads off.) Sam asked him to come with him, before Dad stormed in, but an Ivy League college town was no place for a high school dropout, right? Besides, this is okay. Dad let him have the Impala, and he gets to do some hunts on his own. Sam's at college where he wants to be, away from Dad and out of the hunting life.

Anyway, the full moon is high in the sky, has been for about three hours, and he's been scouring this place for signs of the alleged werewolf in the area where the victim was found and has turned up nothing. The farther he wanders, though, the more he picks up sounds. At first, he thinks it's probably campers or drifters, which means werewolf bait, but the closer he gets to the source, he knows that's not what it is. He can see flashing lights, hear bass pumping so hard the trees seem to tremble with it. He follows the light and sound until he can distinguish the music, stuff he'd normally never listen to, songs cut and layered with electronic beats, synthesizers, and the sound of scratching vinyl. He walks a little closer, and sees a clearing open up, filled with a mass of people dancing and swaying and making out amid strobe lights. A hoodie-clad deejay has his equipment set up on a stone outcropping above the crowd.

This is not a monster bait situation. Not unless it's a fairly sizable pack rather than a lone wolf. (All indications are, however, that whatever killed the person that caught his Dad's attention, it acted alone.) This clearing is wall-to-wall people. He's stumbled onto a rave.

Just as he turns to flee back to the Impala, a smiling guy in a tall, striped felt hat, wearing a glowstick and a pacifier around his neck, jeans, and white tee shirt, takes him by the elbow.

"Where ya going, bro? The party's just getting started!" the dude says.

Dean doesn't know what to say. He knows he must look like a deer in headlights. This is not his scene. Rock concerts, yeah, even festivals.

He's been to Ozzfest, and he snuck off from his Dad for one evening at Woodstock '99. Dive bars and pool halls? Yeah. Raves? Not so much.

The guy assesses him. "First time, huh, dude?"

"I…I just…I saw the lights and I thought...Anyway, I wasn't invited to this party and…" he starts, licking his lips and shifting away nervously. The guy tracks the movement, mirroring the action, and Dean notices. He's not bad looking, tall and wiry with short tufts of messy, dark hair sticking out from under the hat around his hairline and hazel eyes that seem to shift colors with the light, rimmed with thick eyelashes. Dean squashes those thoughts down, shoving them in the lockbox in the back of his mind. He's not gay. He's not.

Hat Dude, as he's calling him in his head, cuts him off, smiling an exuberant, dimpled smile, and throwing his arms wide. "You don't need an invitation! But you've obviously never been to a rave before. They're much better with one of these." The guy reaches into his pocket and pulls out a tiny baggie with a pink, heart-shaped pill in it, pulling Dean's hand open and dropping it in his palm. "Come on, man. You only live once!"

It doesn't look like a roofie. "What is it?" he asks.

"Ecstasy. In a word: awesome," Hat Dude replies.

He's heard about Ecstasy. He hasn't tried it, but he wanted to, still kind of does. Last time it was on offer—in an underground club he was in hunting a vampire in L.A. a couple weeks ago—he hadn't had time to let it wear off before he was supposed to drive to Bakersfield to meet up with Dad, so he'd passed. This time, his timeline is pretty open. He takes the baggie, examining the tiny pink heart.

"You just gonna stare at it all night, Freckles?" Hat Dude asks. "Come on…It'll be fun, whether you take that or not. I mean, look at all the gorgeous people in there!"

Dean releases a short bark of laughter. Apparently he's not the only one coming up with mental nicknames. "Freckles, huh? And here I've been thinking of you as 'Hat Dude.'" He feels his face heat a bit, peeking up at the guy through his eyelashes.

The guy laughs. "Well, I don't always wear the hat, but I'm willing to bet your freckles are always cute." There's a moment of awkwardness. Dean can't look him in the face, afraid he'll do or say something stupid. Hat Dude clears his throat. "Uh, my name's Brian. And I

haven't had my dose yet, either. If you want, we can take them together, party 'til the sun comes up, and then you can go do whatever else you were doing. A few hours aren't going to make that much difference, right?"

"I guess…Uh, and my name's Dean, by the way." He glances back up at the guy—Brian—and knows he's blushing and hates it. It's such a girly thing to do.

Brian smiles, and it lights up his face. Dean feels himself melting a little, the list of all the reasons why he shouldn't want this, read in his Dad's voice, fading into the background of his consciousness. "Well, are you in or are you out, Dean?" he asks, pulling a backpack off his shoulder than Dean hadn't noticed and handing him a bottle of water and a pacifier on a length of cord.

Dean takes a breath, looks at Brian. "I'm…in." Then he looks quizzically at the pacifier and holds it up by the cord. "What's this for?"

"Sometimes E makes you clench your jaw or grind your teeth. Sucking and biting on that helps protect your teeth and keep your jaw from getting stuck or sore later," he replies. "Don't look so scared. It doesn't happen every time, and when it does it doesn't usually last very long."

"Okay. Here goes." Dean hangs the pacifier around his neck, opens the baggie and dumps the pill in his palm before popping it in his mouth, twists the cap off the water and takes a deep drink. The water is cool.

Brian follows suit, and smiles at Dean again. "Come on, Freckles." He grabs Dean by the wrist and tows him into the clearing.

Dean knows when the drug kicks in. He stops feeling awkward and unsure of how to move to this music. He and Brian are back to back dancing with a pair girls decked out in glitter and neon, roommates from U.C.-Santa Cruz. He feels like the music is inside him, moving him. He relaxes, even when he bumps asses with Brian. He starts to see sounds as colors, flashing in time with the strobes. The beats are red and orange and yellow and gold. The singer's voice on the song-of-the-moment is lavender. He starts to feel walls he didn't even know he had drop, like he can feel what other people are feeling, like he is them and they are him and it's awesome. He loves everyone and everything and, here in this clearing, everything is unicorns and rainbows.

Soon, the girls leave, saying they're thirsty, but the way they're

holding onto each other and kissing as they move through the crowd makes him think they won't be back. He's not even bothered about being ditched. He turns to face Brian and they start dancing. This leads to resting his head on Brian's shoulder, which leads to rubbing his cheek against said shoulder, which leads to kissing Brian's neck, which leads to Brian lacing his fingers through Dean's hair and pulling his face up, kissing him on the mouth, which leads to him plastering himself against Brian's front as they continue to kiss and their hips rock against each other to the beat. Other people are dancing and writhing around them, and occasionally he feels them brushing up against him and it feels wonderful, like they're touching his soul.

After a few minutes—he thinks it's minutes—of that, he is rock hard, sweating and panting, and Brian is in a similar state. But Dean doesn't want to stop. It feels too good. It feels so good being wrapped in strong arms, to have large, masculine hands grabbing his ass, and stubble scratching his chin, and all of this, not so he can get enough money to feed himself and Sam, but just because he wants to. They're both moaning and whimpering, too, letting out all these little noises that he occasionally catches over the music. (These sounds are deep red, hot pink, and the loveliest shade of turquoise.) Sober, he'd be embarrassed by his perceived neediness, but he can't…doesn't want to think, only feel. He wants more.

"Let's get out of here," he yells near Brian's ear, hoping he hears him.

"Okay. Where to?" comes the reply.

"This way," Dean says, pulling Brian through the crowd and into the woods in the direction they'd come from.

The music and colors and flashing lights fade. He starts to hear crickets and owls, the sounds of forest creatures which he sees as shades of green. He sees a mossy spot under an old oak, which is perfect as he's going to find before he explodes. He feels so hot, and he *wants*. He wants more kisses and those breathless little sounds (deep red, hot pink, turquoise) they were making back in the clearing, wants to be able to hear them better, to see their colors more clearly. He drags Brian to the spot, takes off his leather jacket and spreads it outside-down on the moss, then sheds his button-up—he's so hot—and spreads it out on top.

He turns around and Brian is smiling. "I like where this is heading, Dean." The words come out violet and soft.

Dean doesn't say anything. He's afraid of breaking the spell. He doesn't want to think, just feel. He pulls his tee shirt over his head, drops it on the ground, stuffs the pacifier in his pocket, and steps closer to Brian. He takes Brian's face in his hands and kisses him. Brian's hands come up and ghost over his back and down, sliding around the waistband of his jeans and up over his stomach and chest to thumb at his nipples. He sighs and moans happily into the kiss, and so does Brian when Dean reciprocates, sliding his hands under the guy's tee shirt.

Finally, after a few minutes like that, Dean pulls back, just barely, one hand grasping the hem of Brian's shirt. "Dude, you have too many clothes on," he says.

Brian laughs. The sound is orange. "Well, if you want me to get my shirt off you're going to have to let go a minute," he says. Dean does, unaware that he had his hand fisted in the material above the guy's heart. Brian drops the backpack that's miraculously remained attached by one strap, takes his hat, glow stick and pacifier off and stuffs them inside, followed by his tee shirt. He pulls another bottle of water out, takes a few swallows, then hands the half-empty bottle to Dean. Now that it has been offered, Dean realizes he's actually really thirsty, and chugs the rest. The empty goes back in the backpack. Brian shoves something in each pocket and then he's back in Dean's space and they're back in business.

Dean guides him back to the makeshift blanket he's set up, turning when he pulls him down so that they're facing each other instead of crashing one atop the other. They resume kissing, drawn out and sensual, hands running everywhere and he can't tell whose hands are whose and he doesn't care. It feels so good, like being caressed by light, he thinks, then chuckles—the sound is lemon yellow—at that because it's a stupid turn of phrase. He knows then, had he ever doubted before, that he'll never be a poet. He wants *more*, and climbs into Brian's lap, grinding their hips together. They break their kiss, gasping (hot pink) and moaning (deep red), pressing their foreheads together.

Brian breaks the silence. "Do want to stop here, or…?" he asks breathlessly.

"Want more," he groans, rolling his hips again, and doesn't stop, picking up a rhythm.

"Then we may…ahhh, fuck…want to take our pants off, or at least

unbutton…oh, my God… and unzip them," Brian says, as sensibly as he can. Dean sees a wash of oceanic navy behind his closed eyelids.

"Off," he says, scooting back and working at his belt buckle, then he realizes there's a question he should probably ask, blushes, and looks up through his lashes. "If that's okay with you, that is. And, uh, do you have…Uh...?" He knows he must be red as a stop sign. Even the tips of his ears feel hot.

Brian smiles, dimples denting both cheeks, and Dean takes a breath he didn't know he'd been denying himself. "Yeah. I got a condom in one pocket and lube in the other. I had 'em in my backpack, but I thought we might need 'em, if I read your intentions correctly." Brian takes Dean's face in his hands, thumbs caressing his flaming cheeks, and Dean's eyes flutter closed. "You're beautiful, Dean." The words come out gold, tinged with reverence, and Dean's stomach fills with butterflies.

He opens his eyes, notices Brian's look blue-green in the moonlight. "You, too," he says, and kisses him again before standing and quickly kicking off his boots, stuffing his socks inside, and yanking his pants and boxers off, laying them on top.

Brian is stripping off his own boxers when Dean makes a decision, going back to the nest he created. He kneels and watches, and when Brian is as naked as he is, erection huge and flush against his belly, he moves onto all fours. Trembling slightly, his own dick bobs with the movement and drips pre-come onto the shirt he'd spread atop his jacket to protect it. He hears Brian's intake of breath before he feels his knees hit the fabric on either side of his calves. He looks backward, sees him set a small bottle of lube and a condom down beside them.

Brian runs his hands softly up Dean's back and down his sides. "You sure?"

"Please. Oh, please fuck me." It comes out as a needy whine. He drops to his forearms, and rests his head on them, ass in the air.

He feels the air move across his back as Brian lets out a long exhale. "Alright. As long as you're sure."

"'M sure," he mumbles, pressing back into nothing. His eyes fall shut. *Please just touch me. Please. Please*, he thinks, and whimpers, actually whimpers, and shivers.

He's rewarded with the sound of the cap flipping up on the lube.

When Brian presses the first lubed finger against his hole, it's not as cold as he expects, and he moans and rocks back appreciatively. "Yeah, it got warm in my pocket."

"More. Please," he whines.

"Patience, Freckles. Gotta open you up first," Brian says, pressing the first finger in to the first knuckle as he lays a kiss at the base of Dean's spine.

Dean's burning up, trembling at the tenderness, but he doesn't want it to stop. He rocks back and Brian takes the hint, pressing a little farther and laying another kiss one vertebrae up his spine. By the time Brian kisses halfway up Dean's back, he has the first finger all the way in, thrusting and occasionally pressing into some magical spot that makes Dean's hips stutter and rips sounds from his throat he didn't know he could make. (These sounds are deep purple.)

"F-fuck. More, please, please," he mewls. "Yes! Oh, God, yes!"

A second finger joins the first, just thrusting to start, and when the kisses reach the base of Dean's neck and begin to travel out along his shoulders Brian begins scissoring them slightly. Dean doesn't know if he's talking, at least not with actual words. He feels, though. He feels Brian pressed against his back. Feels the kisses. Feels himself being stretched. Feels himself rocking back into Brian's fingers, and it feels so good. He's babbling, and has no idea what he's saying, but the words flash between hot pink and turquoise. He hears the cap flick on the lube again and feels a third finger join the other two. His focus narrows. He can still feel everything, feels like he's part of everything, feels like he and Brian are merging, but above all that he feels his orgasm building and it is unlike any other time ever. Then he's empty and Brian's chest disappears from his back. The cool night air hits him and he whimpers.

"Just a sec," comes the reply. He hears the foil on the condom rip, then the lube's cap again. "Gotta get this on…Now, shhhh, I'm not going anywhere."

Then he's being filled and stretched, slowly, agonizingly slowly and he wonders for a second where Brian is finding this much control. He is nothing but sensation and the craving for more. When Brian bottoms out, thighs resting against his own, he nearly keens in joy. He feels more pre-come drip from him. Brian lays another line of kisses along his spine, holding perfectly still, letting Dean adjust. Then he wraps

one arm around Dean's chest, hand resting over his heart, the other hand pulling on his left hip.

"Come up onto your hands and knees, Freckles, so I got more room to work." Dean sees gold again, and obeys. "You're so hot, so tight, this isn't gonna last very long. Wanna make it good for you."

Dean moans and presses his hips back, before he chokes out a breathless response. "Is good…Mmmm…Holy shit…Move…Please, please." Brian glides out, slowly and smoothly, hand still over Dean's heart, pressing him up against his chest, almost pulling out before pressing back in, hitting that spot just as he did with his fingers. Dean keens when he first feels Brian's other hand stroke up and down his own erection. Then the hand around his cock disappears and he hears the lube open again, feels a bit drip against the side of his erection before the hand is back, stoking gently but firmly. Dean rolls his hips, fucking himself into Brian's fist and back on his cock, wordlessly trying to inspire movement. Brian sets a moderate pace, rhythmic, not too fast, not too slow. Perfect, perfect, it's perfect and Dean is losing it. If not for the pleasure, for the feel of hands and kisses peppered along his shoulders, skin on skin, the litany Brian is moaning and whispering into his ear—fuck, so hot, so good, gorgeous—over and over, he feels like he'd have come unmoored from his body and reality by now. They both become wordless as they climb higher, moaning and whimpering and whining, taking shuddering breaths. Dean doesn't know where he ends and Brian begins, wants to sink into the other man's skin and never leave, or maybe he wants Brian to sink into his skin and never leave, keep his confidence for himself. His eyes are shut, and he's watching the colors the sounds they're making send blooming splotches of color across the backs of his eyelids. (Deep red. Hot pink. Turquoise. Gold. Violet. Deep purple.)

Brian's thrusts keep nailing his prostate, and Dean drips more pre-come every time it happens. He feels his orgasm building, feels Brian's thrusts become erratic, and his hand on Dean's cock speeds up. He's climbing closer, closer. They both are.

He hears Brian's voice at his ear, sees a splash of magenta. "So good. So beautiful. Come for me."

And he does. He comes harder than he remembers ever coming, a blast of white and sparkling silver starbursts crossing his vision, spilling all over the guy's hand and the shirt beneath him. He feels Brian swell and hears him groan, feels breath against the side of his neck. Dean collapses onto his forearms, Brian going with him, glued to

his back. They take a few deep, gasping breaths and Brian gently pulls out. He hears the condom land somewhere nearby on the ground. He's boneless, wants to sleep, but he doesn't want to flop down onto the mess that is now his shirt. Still, he's too blissed out and tired to move. He hears Brian step away, hears the zipper of what he assumes is the backpack, and hears him return.

Brian plants another kiss to the base of his spine and rubs his hands up and down his sides. "Come on, Dean. You can't sleep like that. Let's clean you up, and then you need to move out of that position."

Dean hears himself make some unintelligible noise that sounds sort of like, "Nnnng."

"I know. It's intense, especially the first time. Rolling, that is." He hears Brian shuffling through the backpack. "Here we go. Baby wipes."

When Brian starts cleaning him up, he thinks he should be embarrassed, but he's not. Can't bring himself to be. He still feels too good.

"You okay? You're not asleep are you? Do you need the pacifier?" he hears. He's not seeing sounds as colors anymore, and knows he's coming down.

"'M good," he mumbles. "Not asleep. No pacifier."

"Alright, well, you're all cleaned up. Before you pass out, you should probably move off that cum-stained shirt and put your pants and tee shirt on," Brian says. This is punctuated by a light swat to his ass. "Upsy-daisy."

Dean slowly rises, looking dazedly down into Brian's soft, smiling face. He feels an easy smile spread across his face, too, as he stumbles toward the heap he left his clothes in, pulling them on hastily, peeking over his shoulder to see Brian doing the same. When he's dressed and turns back to the spread-out jacket, he sees the stained shirt balled up on the moss beside it.

He flops back down on the edge of the jacket, and Brian sits beside him, lying back so that his torso is on the jacket, one arm behind his head. The other he lays on Dean's shoulder, and pulls. "Come on. You can rest now."

Dean lies on his side, facing Brian and props himself up on one elbow.

“Dude, that was awesome. You’re awesome.”

He laughs. “You’re pretty awesome, too, Freckles.” He reaches up with his free hand and traces Dean’s freckles across one cheek. Dean leans into it and presses a kiss against the inside of his wrist.

“Thanks,” Dean says, cheeks heating again and glancing at him through his eyelashes.

“I should actually probably be thanking you, but you’re welcome.” He lets Brian pull him down and into his side, pillows his head on the guy’s chest, and promptly falls asleep.

He wakes in the grey light and fog of morning, feeling fingers carding through his hair and to the sound of a very close, very male voice. “Wake up, sleepyhead. It’s morning.”

Sober now, the whole previous night comes crashing back, and Dean feels his chest constrict. He let himself be distracted from a hunt. He did E and went to a rave. He made out with a guy. He was touch-starved and needy and made all kinds of embarrassing, girly noises. And, for the first time, he let a guy fuck him, practically begged for it. No, no, no. He remembers how awesome everything felt, but he doesn’t want it to be true. He’s not gay. He’s not. He’s not. He can’t be. He can’t be gay.

He doesn’t even notice when he shoots up and away from the other dude—Brian, he remembers. He doesn’t come out of his own thoughts until his back smacks into the base of the oak tree they’re under and his knees are pressed to his chest. The guy walks toward him, slowly, hands out, stooping, voice soft like he’s trying not to spook an animal.

“Dean, it’s okay. You’re just coming down. You just need some water, some breakfast, some coffee. Come on,” he says.

Dean is shaking his head. “I’m not gay. I like women. I really, really like women. I can’t…I’m not…” Those are the words that fall out of his mouth.

“Oh. Oh, that,” the guy sighs, sits cross-legged in front of him. “It’s okay to experiment, to question, and then decide guys aren’t for you. Or that they are.” Dean shoots him an uncertain look. “It’s also okay if you like both, if you like women *and* men. There’s a word for that. It’s called ‘bisexual.’ You don’t have to just be either straight or gay. Not everyone will agree, of course. The world is full of dicks.” Dean feels the corner of his mouth quirk up in a wry smile, feels his eyebrows lift

momentarily. This he can agree with, the world being full of dicks part. “But there is a middle ground, and there are a lot of us out there who like that middle ground.”

“So you’re…” Dean can’t finish that sentence.

“Bisexual. Yeah. I only recently came out, waited ‘til I was out of Mom and Dad’s house and was sure I wouldn’t have to go back. I start my first full-time, well-paying grown-up job Monday, so this was my last hurrah before I try to make myself into a responsible adult. Anyway, my parents…They weren’t thrilled, mostly because their church teaches that a.) sex before marriage is almost the worst thing you can do, second only to b.) being attracted to and having sex with someone of the same sex, but I can live without their approval. They’re kind of freezing me out right now, won’t talk to me. I don’t know if it will always be that way. It’s too early to tell. But, lest I scare you to death, when I went away to college, I made my own family, and they accept me without reservation. Some of them are various shades of queer, too. Some are straight. Some are questioning. The world is full of dicks, Dean, but it’s also full of really good people who will love you for who you are, not who they want you to be. I promise.”

Dean’s vision starts to blur, feels his face getting hot, and tucks his face into his knees to hide the tears. This guy is not a dick, but he feels like he’s being one. “’M sorry,” he says, and it comes out broken.

He feels Brian card his fingers through his hair. “It’s okay. Looks like last night wasn’t just your first rave and your first experience with E, huh?”

Dean sniffs and wipes his eyes before he looks up. “No. I mean, I’ve done other stuff with guys before, but…”

“But you hadn’t gone that far yet. Man, I’m sorry. As enthusiastic as you were, I didn’t know…I mean, I was rolling, too, but I should’ve…” The guy looks really concerned.

“’S not your fault. I wanted it last night, and it felt awesome, really awesome. It’s just, the way I was raised…This…I don’t know…It’s just…kind of hard to wrap my head around, you know?” He hopes the guy gets it. He looks down at his lap again, pulling up strands of moss and tossing them aside.

“I know. Look, everyone handles this sort of thing at their own speed, okay. You found out something new about yourself, something else you like and it surprised you, and it goes against what you were

taught growing up, and, yeah, that can be overwhelming. That's okay. You don't have to rush, and you don't ever have to come out if you don't feel like it's safe or you don't want to. And another thing…What happened last night doesn't make you less of a man, either, if that's what you're worried about," he explains, patient and running soothing hands along Dean's arms and legs.

Dean wants to believe him, but he can already hear his Dad's voice in his head, the slurs and vitriol that would fall out of his mouth, and the fists to the gut he'd probably receive if he knew. But, he tells himself, Dad doesn't have to know. He's not here. Odds are he'll never see Brian again, and Dad certainly won't ever meet him. He can have this, at least for a little while longer. He lets the tension bleed out of his body. He clears his throat. "Thanks, man. I'm sorry I'm such a mess."

"No problem. Now, uh, my ride is long gone, so do you happen to have a car stashed somewhere?" Brian asks.

"Yeah, hang on." Dean walks over, grabs his coat, slides it on, and pulls a compass out of the pocket to get his bearings. He picks up his soiled shirt and blushes. "It's this way," he says, nodding West and looking for landmarks. He sees the huge, mossy boulder shaped kind of like a heart that he passed half an hour in. "About a half hour hike, I'm sorry to say."

"That's okay, as long as we can grab breakfast. I know a great little place that makes awesome pancakes, and you can get bacon, eggs, sausage, hash browns, even tofu scramble if you want it," he says, and smiles at Dean. "The coffee there is pretty good, too."

"Sounds good to me. Well, except the tofu scramble. That sounds awful, but, yeah, breakfast sounds great," he says, and means it. Something in him has settled into place. The nausea is gone, and now he's starving.

They walk the half hour back to the Impala, where it's parked off the road in a clump of bushes. Brian goes nuts complimenting the car and how well Dean maintains it, and he glows with pride. They get in, split the last bottle of water Brian has, and talk and joke companionably all the way to the little hole-in-the-wall diner he told Dean about. Breakfast is indeed delicious, and they each demolish a short stack of pancakes, bacon, hash browns, and eggs and wash it down with surprisingly great coffee and tall glasses of milk.

After that, he drives Brian home, which turns out to be a little

apartment complex near campus. He pulls into a parking space at the end of a line of curbside spaces, and parks. He rubs his suddenly sweaty palms on his jeans, trying to think of something to say, while Brian scribbles something on a receipt, which, when he hands it to him, he realizes is the receipt from breakfast. (Brian had insisted on paying, which he insisted was because Dean was giving him a ride home.) It's his full name, Brian Smith, and a phone number.

Brian looks at him with the same compassion he had when Dean had his panic attack (or whatever it was) earlier in the morning. "Look, I know you're not from around here. You've got Kansas plates, and I've never seen you around before. Believe me, I'd have noticed you, Freckles. And I know you probably won't be back, and I'm not giving you that to put pressure on you to call. I promise I'm not going to sit by the phone like my thirteen year old little sister. But, I figure there's a chance you might need somebody to talk to sometime, so, just in case, know you can call any time. And if you do roll back through town and find yourself looking for some fun, well, that would be welcomed, too." He smiles.

Dean returns the smile. "Thanks, man." He leaves the "for everything" unsaid, and, instead, leans across the seat and kisses Brian one more time, probably more tenderly than he should since he's leaving, but it feels good.

"You're welcome," he replies as he exits the car. Dean turns the key as Brian turns back and waves, and he returns the gesture before he signals and gets back on the road.

He knows this will probably go into the lockbox in his head at some point. This was not sucking guys off and giving hand jobs for money. That was survival. (And still is, sometimes.) This was for no other reason than mutual pleasure. Well, and the Ecstasy, but, deep down, he knows the drug only brought out a desire that was already there, that it just quieted the voice of his father and his own self-doubt long enough to act on that desire. And, as first times go, it was pretty spectacular. It definitely blew his first time with a girl out of the water. Just as he decided in the woods, he reminds himself he can have this. Dad will never know. No one else will ever have to know, not even if it becomes spank bank material for a while. It will just be their little secret, his and Brian's.

He flips the tape deck on, and sings along to Led Zeppelin's "Ramble On" as he drives through town, heading for Palo Alto. As the song ends, his phone rings. Knowing it's his Dad doesn't, he is surprised to

find, dampen his spirits. He turns the volume down and answers.

“Hey, Dad. The hunt was a bust. I was in those woods all night long, and there was nothing. Either some other hunter beat me to it, or it moved on, and last night was the last night of the full moon. I guess one of us could swing back through next month if you’re still concerned or if another body shows up. Anything else immediate I need to check on down this way?” He mouths a silent thank you to the sky when his Dad says there isn’t. “Alright. I guess I’ll see you in Oregon in a few days.” His Dad grunts an agreement. “’Bye, Dad.”

He hangs up the phone, turns up the music, and smiles. For a second he wonders if he’s still high, but he knows he’s not. He’s just…happy, for once.

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